

BIOGRAPHY FROM COLUMBIA RECORDS

JOHNNY MATHIS

One must deal almost exclusively in superlatives in order to do justice to the Johnny Mathis mystique. Among the most popular balladeers in the world, Mathis, with his mellow voice and gentle delivery, never fails to captivate an audience. His long list of successful Columbia albums are evidence of his sustaining charismatic appeal.

An undisputed phenomenon in today's music world, Mathis describes his voice as enigmatic. Perhaps enigmatic but certainly contemporary, Johnny Mathis' voice has both sustained its drawing-card quality and appeal and resisted the rapidly changing torrents of rock 'n' roll, folk-rock, psychedelia, country-rock, and whatever-else-rock. A gentle, honest voice that touches the heart carefully and tenderly is Mathis' stock-in-trade.

He is unpretentious, acknowledging the simplicity of his songs at a time when its "in" to sing lyrics shrouded in symbolism or with deep social significance.

Whether he is singing in English, French, Spanish, Hebrew, Italian, or Portuguese, he conveys his message. Some people call it the Mathis magic. Perhaps that magic is, in reality, the skillful coupling of talent, intensity, and technique, tempered instinctively with the near painful sensitivity of a first-rate vocalist. Among the simple but significant words of praise for Johnny Mathis are the two comprehensive statements: "He's like a wonderful musical instrument," and "He doesn't sing a song, he lives it."

Johnny Mathis' achievements as a recording artist are remarkable. During his thirteen-year association with Columbia Records, he has recorded a long series of albums--all best sellers--of which eight received Gold Records, signifying sales in excess of one million dollars. His biggest-selling album, which is, in fact, one of the best-selling LPs of all time, "Johnny's Greatest Hits" earned him a special Billboard award for being the only artist to have one album remain on the charts for over four hundred consecutive weeks. Moreover, all of Johnny Mathis' recordings have reached over the half-million sales mark. Pretty impressive data for a soft-spoken young man who, as a prime exponent of understatement, commented, "I think I can say my style has done pretty well

for me through the years."

No one doubts that the never duplicated showmanship and style of this superb craftsman is earmarked for continuing success. Booked at least a year in advance for nightclub, concert, and television, Mathis has successfully conquered audiences in all three media.

Music has been an integral part of the balladeer's life since his childhood in San Francisco, California, where he began voice lessons at the age of thirteen, and to coin a phrase, a star was born. He has since had the opportunity to travel extensively, observing customs and music all over the world. His international experiences have reinforced his conviction that music, one of the most expressive art forms, is an indispensable factor in the "one-world" concept, uniting the peoples of the globe. Music, Mathis feels, is a means of international communication.

An exceptional athlete, Mathis, by the time he had completed his first year at San Francisco State College, was considered by many to be Olympic star material. At this point in time, his athletic prowess was being channeled into preparation to be a physical education instructor.

The pursuit of a teaching career seemed much more feasible to the young student than a singing career, even though his immense talent and enjoyment of music were evident.

As fate would have it, Mathis heard of a local club owner in need of a singer to fill in for the summer. He auditioned and was hired on the spot. Subsequently, he and a group of musician friends put on an informal and impromptu jam session at the club one seemingly quiet afternoon. A chance event that altered the life of the aspiring athlete. A vacationing Columbia executive happened into the club, and immediately upon hearing the session, excitedly cabled Columbia: "Have found phenomenal 19-year-old boy who could go all the way! Send blank contracts."

Today, Johnny Mathis has not only fulfilled but surpassed all expectations. He continues to be one of show business' finest talents. The Mathis mystique remains intact.